

January 30, 1961

B. O. Ward, Ph.D., Director
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Mississippi Southern College
Box 264
Station A
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Dear Doctor Ward:

Thank you for your letter of January 9 and for bringing my attention to your 1955 paper. I certainly have to agree with your remark, as of course I have done, that biological thinking has tended to be over-particularized. Whether it would be possible to answer the evident need by a specific program in "theoretical biologics" would be harder to say.

To answer the explicit question in your letter, we are assembling a small experimental group with the aim of defining and building preliminary models of experiments that might be flown to Mars to detect indigenous life. Since we already have rather strong resources in biochemistry, microbiology and genetics, I had thought that our principal needs for new people would be in the area of biophysical instrumentation. However, in view of your evident foresight and enthusiasm, I should keep in mind during the forthcoming months whether there might not be a place here that could be useful and attractive to you. To this end, I would be very pleased if you could send me a more complete resumé of your academic and research background so that I might have a more explicit judgement of what you could offer such a program. I would not want you to have an unduly optimistic impression of the possibility, but I can certainly say that it could not be excluded at the present time.

If you could furnish these materials in two copies that would be especially. Your publications would be, of course, especially useful.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL Enc